

EIGHTEEN FEET OF TREE IN FOURTEEN MONTHS

**How the Rubber Forest Is Thriving in the Wet
Lands of Nahiku, Maui---Fine Prospect
For a New Industry.**

Whether or not anyone ever gets dividends out of rubber, the residents of the District of Nahiku, Maui, will have reason to bless the day that the idea of growing rubber trees in Hawaii was first suggested. A little over a year ago a few homesteaders dwelt in Nahiku, living on their land chiefly because they hadn't money enough to go elsewhere. Wild bananas gathered in the jungle, mixed with guavas from the lower hillsides and washed down with milk from the cattle that wandered in the forest---this was their means of subsistence. But the last year has demonstrated that rubber trees will grow in the district and the Nahiku of a year ago would scarcely be recognized now.

"Why, last year there was not a ten-cent piece in the whole district," said a resident the other day, "and look at the difference now. We'll all be millionaires in a few years more," and he swelled up with the pride of ownership of a hundred or so of acres of rubber land which he was convinced, as are most of the people who have visited the District of Nahiku recently, would bring him in large returns in a few years.

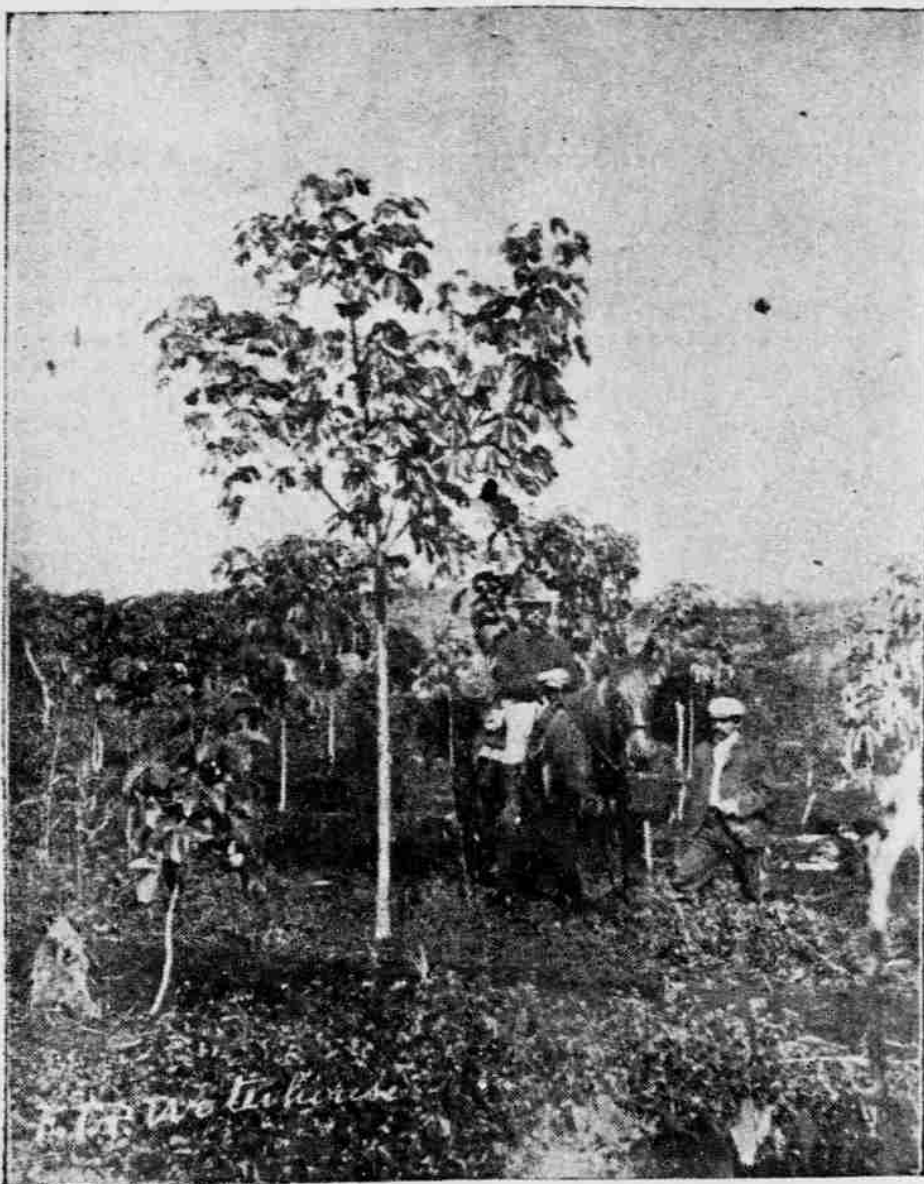
A VIEW OF NAHIKU.

Messrs. Fred. T. P. Waterhouse and Wade Warren Thayer, who returned on Thursday from a visit of inspection of the properties of the Nahiku Rubber Company, bring encouraging re-

port over the slopes of the mountain. The constant upspringing of new growth has prevented the washing of this soil into the sea. The result is a veritable jungle, where the trade winds, laden with moisture from their thousand-mile sweep over the sea, condense in the cool air of lofty Haleakala and drop daily showers through the forest growth. In a single night, almost, a seed will grow into a plant---another and it will be a shrub---in a week the shrub will be a tree.

FROM DISCOURAGEMENT TO HOPE.

"It is only natural to ask why such a favored district has not been turned to some good use heretofore. In 1898 these lands were opened for homesteads by the Republic of Hawaii, and they were settled by a colony of Portuguese. Then came the boom in sugar culture, the organization of the Nahiku Sugar Company, its collapse with many other new companies when sugar prices dropped and the gradual drifting of Nahiku into innocuous desuetude. That the sugar company failed is not surprising, for this district, on the steep mountain side, cut and scarred here with deep gulches and ravines, is at the best little suited to the growing of sugar cane. Coffee was tried by the Portuguese homesteaders, but it was also a failure owing to the expense of picking, milling and transportation. And so the district has lain idle and the residents there have grown poorer and poorer until many families were actually on the verge of starvation; they could not make a living at their truck patches



NAHIKU SEEDLING RUBBER TREE FOURTEEN MONTHS OLD.

ful of the seeds of the Ceara tree---a rubber-producer whose native place is the district of Ceara in Brazil---and noted their growth. With a few days of the heavy showers which are characteristic of Nahiku the seeds sprouted and came up; in a few weeks they had grown into foot-high plants, and Mr. Anderson began to believe that rubber trees would grow in Hawaii. Then he went down the mountain side to Nahiku landing and there found three Ceara trees which had been planted as shade trees in a private yard by Hugh Howell seven years ago. Anderson tapped these trees experimentally and their flow of latex---the milky fluid which carries the rubber

back may ride beneath their lower branches without bending his head. And other orchards are being planted all along the nearby slopes of Haleakala, the primeval forest is falling before the axes of forces of laborers, and little rubber saplings from a foot to ten or eighteen feet in height are springing up everywhere to eventually clothe the mountain sides.

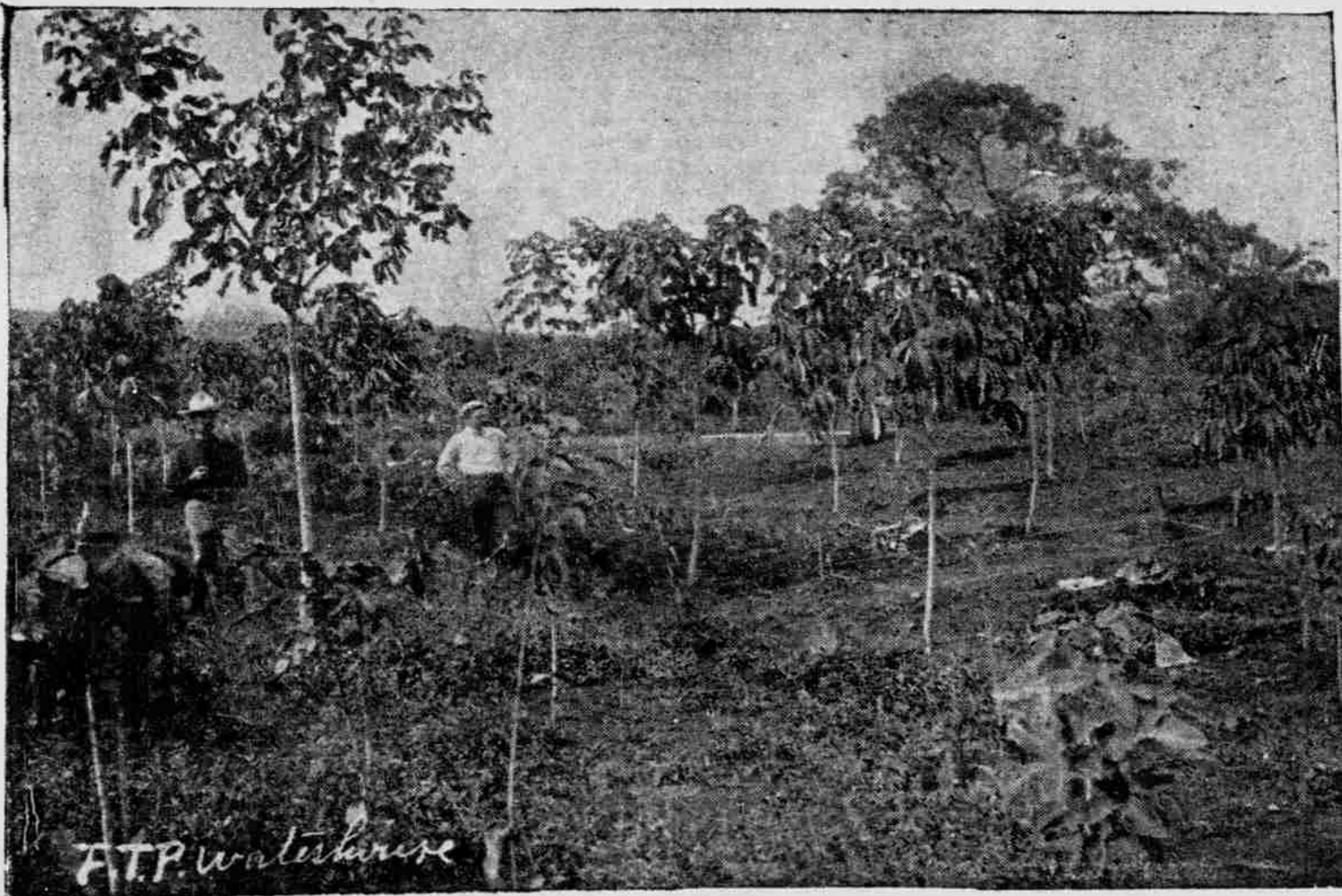
"To the visitor little progress in clearing the lands seems to have been made for all the cleared lands are a vast tangle of dead and rotting tree ferns. To plant rubber it is not necessary to remove the fern stumps and the trunks of the felled trees. There is little or no hard wood in the district and the plan followed is merely to cut out the undergrowth and to fell the trees and leave them to rot where they fall. The process of disintegration is exceedingly fast in that moist and humid district and the dead wood rapidly becomes new soil. In the midst of the heaps of fallen trees and piles of fern stumps at regular intervals spaces a few feet square are cleared and here the young plant just emerged from the seed is brought from the nurseries and set out.

HOW RUBBER TREES PROGRESS.

"The progress of the growth of a rubber tree from seed to plant, plant to sapling and sapling to its full growth is interesting to study. The seed of the Ceara when green looks like a young lime; as it grows to full maturity its shell bursts with a loud 'pop' like a torpedo and the tree seeds---brown and shiny and mottled, very like tiny turtles with head, legs and tail drawn in---fly in all directions. The seeds are first filed or ground at the sharper end to aid in the process of germination and they are then planted in nurseries, low structures, covered with wire netting to keep out the rats, which abound in the surrounding forest, and in two or three days two little green leaves appear above the surface. At once they are transplanted to their permanent abodes. Mr. Anderson has devised a very ingenious plan for transplanting. A piece of sheet iron or brass about eight inches long is shaped into a sort of square-sided handleless trowel. This is pushed into the soft soil beside the young plant and when withdrawn brings the plant, earth and all with it. This trowel is placed in a rack, another is used for the next plant and when the laborer has a rack full he carries his load to the field where the holes have been dug. Placing the trowel in the hole he heaps the earth around it and carefully withdraws the trowel, leaving the young plant behind. This method of transporting the plant from nursery to field in its own earth saves its roots from exposure to the air and lessens the danger of injuring the tender stalk. It has been one of the reasons why so few of the young trees have died in the first few months. After it is set in its permanent home the plant is protected for a few weeks from the depredations of the cut worm by placing over it a short cross-section of bamboo. Once the young shoot has grown to three or four inches in height it will take care of itself, neither rats nor cut worms attacking it, and then it needs but occasional cultivation of the soil about it for the next year or so of its life.

WHEN TO TAP.

"Experts in different parts of the world have fixed different ages at which it is safe to begin tapping rubber trees for commercial purposes. Some trees may be tapped without injury after three to four years, while others are of slower growth and six years is the minimum age at which they should be tapped. The Ceara tree, which belongs to the same family as the castor oil plant and the cassava, and has a smooth bark somewhat like the birch, and a large many-lobed leaf, is the tree which has been most largely planted in Nahiku thus far. It produces rubber early and in considerable quantities. In a recent monograph on 'Rubber in Hawaii,' Mr. Jared G. Smith of the United States Agricultural Station in Honolulu stated that Ceara was especially suited to the climate of these islands and should produce well here. The Nahiku Rubber Company has likewise planted a large number of Hevea Brasiliensis, the tree which produces the celebrated 'Para' rubber, whose price on the London market fixes the price of rubber the world over. (The price of Para at the present time is \$1.50 per pound.) The Ficus Elastica, which is akin to the banyan, and which grows well at high elevations and in a climate whose minimum temperature is near the frost line, will be planted on the higher lands."



VIEW OF YEAR OLD GROVE OF RUBBER TREES, NAHIKU RUBBER CO., MAUI.

ports of the progress of rubber culture in Nahiku and vicinity. The Nahiku Rubber Company was organized in January, 1905, and owns the first rubber plantation ever started on American soil. Besides this corporation, the Koolau Rubber Company, organized in April, 1905, and Hugh Howell, the Walluku engineer, both have considerable areas of land in Nahiku already planted with rubber trees. Rumor has it also that the large tract of land in Nahiku controlled by Alexander Baldwin, as successor in interest of the defunct Nahiku Sugar Company, will be planted with rubber trees.

"Rubber culture has been thus far considered as a possibility in Hawaii," said Mr. Thayer yesterday, "but not much more than that. When you consider the fact that the Nahiku Rubber Company already has over 50,000 trees planted, that the Koolau Company has about 10,000 trees and Mr. Howell has nearly 4000 trees in the ground, it is time to take rubber seriously. Nor have these companies gone into the matter blindly, for in Nahiku and Hana, which is just beyond, there are now growing seven-year-old trees that have been experimentally tapped at intervals during the past year and whose yield has been equal to the trees of the same age in Mexico, Brazil and Ceylon, where rubber culture has been a commercial success for several years.

AN ISOLATED DISTRICT.

"Very few people in Honolulu have much idea of the Nahiku district. It is one of the most isolated sections of the islands. It is only accessible by carriage or wagon from Hana, at the extreme eastern point of Maui, and there is a bridle trail along the Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company's ditches which connects it with Paia and Central Maui. The district is noted for the tremendous rainfall, running from 198 inches per annum to something over 400 inches in the winter of 1901-2. Most of the water which is used to irrigate the fertile plains of Central Maui comes from this district. Grand old Haleakala rises here somewhat steeply from the sea and all its lower slopes, from about 8000 feet down are covered with a dense tropical forest, impossible to penetrate save by the infrequent bridle trails. Centuries of the growth and decay of tree ferns, wild bananas, lauhala, kukui and ohia have left a deep deposit of rich loamy

and cattle for there was no market for their produce nearer than Central Maui---thirty or forty miles away across the jungle, and they couldn't move away, for they hadn't a dollar among the lot.

"But little over a year ago a man came into the district who knew something of rubber and rubber culture. This was R. H. Anderson, who had studied rubber in Brazil and the West Indies and Mexico. In Nahiku, he found the conditions which he had looked for. He stayed in the district a few weeks and planted out a hand-

particles in suspension---was surprising. A visit to Hana, where several trees of the Ficus Elastica variety grew, and more tapping convinced him that rubber trees would not only grow, but would produce rubber.

A PHENOMENAL GROWTH.

"This was the origin of the rubber industry in Hawaii. That little grove of trees planted by Mr. Anderson in January, 1905, is now a thriving young orchard. SOME OF THE TREES IN WHICH STAND EIGHTEEN FEET TALL---so high that a man on horse-



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If the judgment of the rubber planters is not very much at fault there will exist in Hawaii in a few more years a thriving industry which will be only second in importance to the culture of sugar cane. Nor will the growing of rubber interfere with the sugar industry, for only certain favored localities are suited to its cultivation, and those localities are not as a rule adapted to sugar. The district of Oahu and parts of Puna and Kohala on Hawaii; Kaenae, which adjoins Nahiku on Maui; Maunawili and upper Manoa Valley on Oahu and possibly Hana-

lei and Wainiha on Kauai are sections which may in the future be used to produce rubber.

Marketer---"How much are strawberries?" Dealer---"One dollar a box." Marketer---"Give me some good sour pickles---they cost less and taste about the same."---Cleveland Leader.

"These Chinamen are all as like as two peas," remarked the visitor to Chinatown. "Yes, or as two queues," added the tenderloin cop.---Philadelphia Record.